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December 20, 2004

Food and Drug Administration
Division of Dockets Management
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

RE: Docket Numbers: 1996P-0418, 1997P-0197, 1998P-0203, 200N-0504

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is being submitted on behalf of Viva!USA regarding the issue of the prevention of salmonella outbreaks in eggs during production.

In this regard, we strongly urge the FDA to ban the common practice of forced molting. This practice involves the starvation of hens for up to 14 days in order to induce a final egg-laying cycle. Forced molting is highly stressful to hens, putting a strain on their immune system and therefore leaving them highly vulnerable to transmissible diseases such as salmonella.

This practice is performed by up to 75% of the poultry farmers, which means that a high percentage of eggs being passed on to consumers are vulnerable to salmonella and other communicable diseases.

Therefore, in the interest of public health and safety, we strongly urge the FDA to ban the practice of forced molting.

The cruelty and the contamination are irrevocably linked. The FDA must take an initial step to ensure the public safety and try to eliminate some of the suffering of these animals by prohibiting the practice of forced molting. You have the jurisdiction, responsibility and authority to ban farm practices, such as forced molting, that injure human health. I strongly urge you to do so in this instance.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

lauren Ornelas
US Campaigns Director

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